



New Castle Crier

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Action delayed; additional hearing scheduled for proposed ordinance governing vacant buildings

At their last meeting, City Council members delayed taking action on a new ordinance governing vacant buildings. Possible adoption was delayed due to a change in the ordinance after the third reading.

The majority of City Council members agreed to add a retroactive clause to the ordinance. This was viewed as a significant change, and therefore a further public hearing has been scheduled on the matter just before the next City Council meeting. The hearing is at 6:45 p.m. at the Town Hall on Tuesday, October 9.

Action on the final version of the ordinance, after a fourth reading, may take place at the City Council meeting at the same place and on the same date, with that meeting starting at 7 p.m.

The ordinance would require owners who have vacant buildings on their properties to register with the City and pay an annual registration fee. The longer a building is vacant, the higher the fee which is required to be paid. The fees range from no charge for a building vacant less than one year, to \$5,000 or more for buildings vacant for ten years or greater.

As is normally the case with many ordinances, this one contains

several definitions of terms. Those definitions include what constitutes a vacant building. That is, a build-



ing where no business is being conducted (in the case of commercial or industrial properties), or where no owner or tenant resides within the building (in the case of residential properties), and also one which is not being marketed for sale. This would not include, however, buildings where the owner for specified reasons resides elsewhere on a temporary basis.

The following is the clause added to the proposed ordinance at the last City Council meeting:

“Retroactivity. This ordinance shall be applied retroactively. Any building which is vacant on the date of the enactment of this ordinance

shall be charged such registration fee as is appropriate based upon the length of time which such building or structure has been continuously vacant immediately prior to the date of enactment of this ordinance.”

The ordinance also includes a process which allows property owners to appeal, which if successful could result in a one-time waiver of the registration fee.

To view the entire text of the proposed ordinance, go to the City's Web site at: www.NewCastleCity.org.

Paper copies of the ordinance are also available for pickup at the City Administration offices at 220 Delaware Street. Persons with questions about this proposal should call City Administrator Cathie Thomas at 322-9812, or e-mail:

CathrynThomas@NewCastleCity.org.

**The next
regular
City Council
meeting is 7 p.m.,
Tues., Oct. 9 at
Town Hall**

New Castle – The First Capital City!

City Council appoints new Public Services Director

After an extended search, at their last meeting City Council members approved appointment of a new Public Services Director. Mr. Matthew Christopher was hired and began his duties with the City on September 20. Mr. Christopher comes to the City with a wealth of experience, having served as Public Works Director in Wildwood, New Jersey for several years.

In New Castle, the Director's position was vacated in April, 2005 and remained vacant until October of last

year, when Mr. Frank DiSabatino was appointed to the position on an interim basis. Earlier this year, when Mr. DiSabatino declined the permanent appointment, the City Council took up the search again for a new Director.

Mr. DiSabatino served with distinction during his interim appointment and the City is grateful for his assistance. The City is fortunate he will remain in our employ in the position of Equipment Operator.

Outgoing Interim Director of Public Services offers kudos to public works personnel

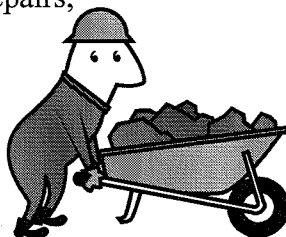
By Frank DiSabatino
Interim Dir. of Public Services

The Public Works employees deserve accolades for their efforts in keeping the City parks clean, grass cut and edged. Four days each workweek personnel collect 16 tons of household trash, which gives them a walking workout of six miles in any weather. Performing this work in a few days of extremes — 100-degree plus heat or freezing sleet — can pose quite a challenge.

Seasonally and when time permits, the employees are responsible for completing some of the following items on a daily basis:

- street sweeping;
- cleaning out storm water catch basins;
- yard waste removal;
- installation of playground equipment;
- tending to gardens, including mulching, watering flowers and weed control;
- vehicle maintenance;
- building maintenance;
- emergency pot hole repairs;
- river walk maintenance;
- installation of road signs, street markings and handi-capped parking spaces;
- boarding up vacant houses;
- graffiti removal;

- repairing vandalized Battery Park rest rooms;
- coordinating State road repairs;



- installing electric sign boards;
- maintaining the recycling area;
- cleanup of illegal dump sites;

- support for the summer recreation program;
- special events setup, take-down and cleanup;
- snow and ice control including plowing, salting, sanding and hand shoveling;
- handling any other complaints or concerns received from citizens and business owners.

My hat is off to the those responsible for doing what is necessary to keep City facilities, streets and parks as clean and well-maintained as possible.

Code Enforcement Corner

The City of New Castle Board of Health strives to keep properties in conformance with adopted rules and codes.

To report any problems or file a complaint, please call Code Enforcement Officer John Lloyd at 302-323-6081. Complaint forms are also available on the City Web site at www.NewCastleCity.org.

This month's Code highlights and general reminders...

- All unregistered, abandoned, inoperable or wrecked vehicles need to be removed from the City limits. They cannot be on any streets, public property or private property.
- Rear yards require maintenance to the same standards as front yards.
- Do not allow standing water to accumulate *anywhere*.
- Please clean up after domestic animals.
- Be courteous to your neighbors and keep noise to a minimum between 9 p.m. and 7 a.m.